

## Tarkiln Users Want to Continue

By SUSANNA SHEEHAN

In preparation for the June Special Town Meeting, users of the Tarkiln Community Center stepped forward this week to show selectmen just how much that historic building is being used.

An article on the June 14 Special Town Meeting warrant will propose spending \$33,000 for an architectural/structural assessment of the old school building, which dates back to 1871. The money will come from Community Preservation Act funds earmarked for historical preservation. The Community Preservation Committee and the Duxbury Historical Commission are sponsoring the article.

At least twelve different organizations currently use the Tarkiln building, said Mary Wilber, a member of the New Covenant Fellowship, a church group that meets there every Sunday. Boy Scout Troups #62 and #82 use the building once a week. Three different dance instruction groups also meet there, including an Irish step dance class and a new Chinese

dance class. Also, Alcoholics Anonymous meetings are held at Tarkiln twice a week. Once a month, there is a food co-op that provides food for 20 families. Also, supporters of the effort to save the O'Neil farm and the Bay Players theatrical group use the Tarkiln Center, which is located on Summer St. (Route 53).

"There's not a day without something going on," Wilber told selectmen at their weekly Monday meeting.

"We've been using it for years," said Carlton Williams, a leader of Boy Scout Troop 82. "It's perfect for scouts."

"There is a huge need for this building," Williams added.

Selectman Betsy Sullivan asked Wilber and other users if they would continue to use the building if their lease rates increased. Now, the rate is \$4 an hour.

"I can say with great certainty that that is very short-lived," said Sullivan.

Wilber said the building was well suited to the church's needs and that other users she'd talked to would pay more to

stay at Tarkiln.

"The price is not realistic," Wilber said. "I don't know why it's at that level. I would think it would have been raised long ago."

The fee has not been raised because selectmen don't control the building. Town Manager Rocco Longo said he would recommend to selectmen that they take over the care of the center from the last remaining Tarkiln trustee, Jack Williams. Longo said he recommended this action in 1995, but selectmen then did not want to "offend" Jack Williams and kept the status quo. Once the selectmen control the building, they can set the rental fees. The town pays to maintain and operate Tarkiln.

If Special Town Meeting passes the article for the study, then a consultant would be hired to decide what work the building needs and estimate how much it will cost. The study would be similar to the one done for the 1907 Wright Building on St. George St. \$33,000 will pay for architectural and schematic drawings of Tarkiln's existing condition, lead paint and asbestos sampling, and new mechanical and electrical systems estimates. The study would also show how the building could be made handicapped accessible to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Mark Cleveland, a Boy Scout leader, hoped that the consultant hired to study Tarkiln take into consideration how it is currently being used.

"I'd like to make sure that as plans progress, we stay open to what the building is already used for," said Cleveland.

Carlton Williams suggested using Eagle Scout candidates to volunteer their time on projects at the Tarkiln building.